PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) During 1992-93 (upto 28.2.93), a quantity of 18,431 MTs of tobacco valued at Rs. 116.41 crores has been exported to Russia.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Export of tea

2352. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the disintegration of the Soviet Union has adversely affected the Indian tea export trade;

(b) if so, what remedial measures Government have taken to tide over the losses due to the above factor;

(c) what are the other countries buying Indian tea; and

(d) whether any new areas for export have been identified?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Tea Industry is facing difficulties on account of reduced purchases by the CIS countries, which were a major buyer of Indian Tea during the previous year.

(b) Government has been encouraging diversification of tea export by sponsoring industry delegation to various countries. Trade Protocols have also been entered into with some of the CIS countries including Russia. Other countries are being persuaded to buy higher quantities of Indian Tea indicating them the price competitiveness of our tea.

(c) and (d) Other major buyer of Indian Tea are U.K., Poland, Iran, Egypt, Germany, UAE, Japan etc. Efforts are made on a continuing basis to diversify exports of tea and explore new markets for Indian teas.

Medium term policy for farm exports

2353. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated medium term policy for farm and agricultural exports;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the time by when it is likely to be formulated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) The objective of Government is to make a policy environment for exports. The exchange rate adjustments, the introduction of a unified exchange rate, the expansion of the definition of 'manufacture' in the Exim Policy 1992—97 to include agriculture and allied activities, the lowering of customs duties, particularly those relating to agri-commodities, and the simplification of preshipment inspection procedures are all strategies towards facilitating export of agricultural commodities. However, exports of agricultural commodities are promoted in such a manner that domestic availability of items of mass consumption is not affected. Hence, all agricultural commodities may be exported without any restriction except to the extent that such exports are regulated by the Negative List of exports or any other provision of the extent Exim Policy or any other law for the time being in force.

Trade with Central Asian Republics

2354. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Asian Republic of Kazakhastan, Krighyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan, have invited Indian traders to enter into trade; and

(b) if so, what are the commodities which have potential for trade in these countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) All five Central Asian Republics, namely, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkemnistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrghyzstan, have, in their various contacts with us including at the highest level, repeatedly conveyed their desire to encourage and promote bilateral trade with India.

(b) Potential for trade with these countries exists for a large variety of commodities. Major items that could be exported from India include all varieties of consumer goods, tea, agricultural commodities, pesticides, pharmaceuticals and engineering goods including project export. Main items with potential for import from these countries are minerals including crude oil, liquified natural gas and non-ferrous metals, raw hides and skins, cotton and wool.

2355. [*Transferred to 18th March, 1993.*]

Representation from Tamil Nadu Tanners, Exporters and Importers Association

2356. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation from the Tamil Nadu Tanners, Exporters and Importers Association about their difficulties arising out of the Government's ban on lighter shade of leather; and

(b) if so, what are the steps taken by Government to remove the difficulties of the small and medium scale leather tanners?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Introduction of free trade in Indian Econoym

2357. DR. ISHWAR CHANDRA GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of advantages to Indian Economy by introduction of free trade;

(b) what are the details of its impact on indigenous items for which free trade has been allowed;

(c) what are the view of big industrialists on the ree trade policy; and

(d) wfhether the idea of free trade

(d) whether the idea of free trade policy has been conceived under the dictates of the U.S. dominated World Bank and I.M.F.?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The liberal trade policy of the Government would facilitate easy availability of imported raw materials, intermediates, components consumables and capital goods from the international market. This would in turn, help to promote the productivity, modernisation and competitiveness of Indian industry and thereby enhance its export capabilities.

(b) Since the announcement of the new Export-Import Policy, exports have shown a higher growth rate of 3.4 per cent in April-December 1992 as compare to a negative growth rate of 3.7 per cent during April-December 1991. Similarly, the Negative growth of 0.1 per cent experienced in industrial production during 1991-92 has been reversed and during April-November, 1992 for which data is available so far, industrial production has recorded a growth rate of 3.9 per cent compare to the corresponding period of last year.